

RISK LEVEL

Assign the family's risk level based on the highest score on either scale, using the following chart.

<u>Neglect Score</u>	<u>Abuse Score</u>	<u>Risk Level</u>
___ 0- 4	___ 0- 2	___ Low
___ 5- 7	___ 3- 5	___ Moderate
___ 8-12	___ 6- 9	___ High
___ 13-20	___ 10-16	___ Intensive

Overrides

Policy: Override to intensive. Check appropriate reason.

- ___ 1. Sexual Abuse cases where the perpetrator is likely to have access to the child victim.
- ___ 2. Cases with non-accidental physical injury to an infant.
- ___ 3. Serious non-accidental physical injury requiring hospital or medical treatment.
- ___ 4. Death (previous or current) of a sibling as a result of abuse or neglect.

Discretionary: Override one level.

___ 5. Reason: _____

Override Risk Level: ___ Low ___ Moderate ___ High ___ Intensive

Social Worker: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor's Review/Approval of Override: _____ Date: _____

NORTH CAROLINA
FAMILY RISK ASSESSMENT OF ABUSE/NEGLECT
DEFINITIONS

Only one household should be assessed on a risk assessment form. If there are two households in a case and both have responsibilities for childcare, score each separately by completing two separate Risk Assessment tools.

The primary caregiver is the adult (typically the parent) living in the household who assumes the most responsibility for childcare. When two adult caregivers are present and the worker is in doubt about which one assumes the most child care responsibility, the adult legally responsible for the children involved in the incident should be selected. If this rule does not resolve the question, the legally responsible adult who is an alleged perpetrator should be selected. **Only one primary caregiver can be identified.**

The secondary caregiver is defined as an adult living in the household who has routine responsibility for childcare, but less responsibility than the primary caregiver. A living together partner can be a secondary caregiver even though they have minimal responsibility for the care of the children.

NEGLECT SCALE

- N1. Current Report is for Neglect** - "Yes" if the current report is for neglect or both abuse and neglect. This includes any allegations under assessment even if not identified in the original report. "No" if the current report is not for neglect.
- N2. Number of Prior Assigned Reports** - Count all maltreatment reports, which were assigned for CPS assessment for any type of abuse or neglect prior to the report resulting in the current assessment.
- N3. Number of Children in the Home** - Number of individuals under 18 years of age *residing* in the home at the time of the current report. If a child is removed as a result of the assessment or is on runaway status, count the child as residing in the home.
- N4. Number of Adults in Home at Time of Report** - Number of individuals 18 years of age or older *residing* in home at time of current report.
- N5. Age of Primary Caregiver** - Age at the time of assessment
- N6. Characteristics of Primary Caregiver** - Check appropriate box and *add the indicated* scores for each primary caregiver characteristic: a) **Not applicable**; b) **Lacks parenting skills** -inability or unwillingness to care for/supervise children, uses excessive physical/verbal punishment, lacks knowledge of child development and age-appropriate expectations for children, poor knowledge of age-appropriate disciplinary methods; c) **Lacks self-esteem** -lacks confidence, is withdrawn, doubts abilities, self-disparagement; d) **Apathetic or hopeless** - appears overwhelmed, is indifferent, recent substantial decline in hygiene, energy level, and/or physical appearance not related to a medical problem.
- N7. Primary Caregiver Involved in Harmful Relationships** - a) **No**; b) **Yes, but not a victim of domestic violence** - adult relationships outside the home such as criminal activities which are harmful to domestic functioning or child care, or harmful adult relationships inside the home not at the level of domestic violence. c) **Yes, as victim of domestic violence** - a relationship characterized by domestic disturbances or conflicts that require intervention by police, family, or others, often involving physical violence by one or both caregivers. See also A8 definition.
- N8. Primary Caregiver has a Current Substance Abuse Problem** - The primary caregiver has a *current* alcohol/drug abuse problem, evidenced by use causing conflict in home, extreme behavior/attitudes, financial difficulties, frequent illness, job absenteeism, job changes or unemployment, or driving under the influence, traffic violations, criminal arrests, disappearance of household items (especially those easily sold), or life organized around substance use. a) **No problems**; b) **Alcohol only** - alcohol abuse but no problem with other drugs, c) **Other drug(s) (with or without alcohol)** - abusing drugs other than alcohol such as cocaine, marijuana, heroin, barbiturate, prescription. The caregiver may be poly-addicted and may also abuse alcohol.

- N9. Household is Experiencing Severe Financial Difficulty** - "Yes" if caregiver(s) cannot consistently pay for one or more basic household necessities (rent, heat, light, food, clothing). Household is not living within its means due to caregiver actions or inaction. "No" if caregiver(s) consistently pays for basic household necessities or if poverty is the sole factor and caregivers are willing to access resources/services needed to correct the concern.
- N10. Primary Caregiver's Motivation to Improve Parenting Skills** - Based on worker judgment made by observing primary caregiver response to a safety plan or other offers of agency assistance made during the assessment. a) **Motivated and realistic** - no need to improve parenting skills, or there is a need and the primary caregiver is willing and able to work with the agency within established time frames; b) **Unmotivated** - able, but has not demonstrated a willingness to address parenting skills issues within established time frames; c) **Motivated but unrealistic** - willing to make agreed upon changes but the primary caregiver's physical, intellectual, or mental ability precludes making the changes within established time frames.
- N11. Caregiver(s) Response to Assessment** - Based on the caregiver who is least cooperative or is least in agreement with the Social Worker. a) **Viewed situation as seriously as Social Worker and cooperated satisfactorily** - a single caregiver or both regard the situation as seriously as the social worker and are cooperative as evidenced by involvement in services planning for self/children, making safety plans for the child (ren), etc.; b) **Viewed situation less seriously than Social Worker** - *either* caregiver views the determined incident less seriously than the social worker or minimizes the level of harm to the child (ren); c) **Failed to cooperate satisfactorily** - *either* caregiver refuses involvement in the assessment and/or refuses access to the child (ren) during the assessment, etc.; d) **Both b and c** - *either* caregiver views the situation less seriously than Social Worker *and* did not cooperate during the assessment.

ABUSE SCALE

- A1. Current Report is for Abuse** - "Yes" if the current report is for abuse or both abuse and neglect. This includes any allegations under assessment even if not identified in the original report. "No" if current report is not for abuse.
- A2. Prior Assigned Abuse Reports** - Include all reports, assigned for CPS assessment for any type of abuse prior to the current assessment: a) no prior *abuse* reports investigated; b) a prior investigated report of any type of abuse *except* sexual abuse; c) a prior investigated sexual abuse report; d) prior investigated reports of *both* sexual abuse and other types of abuse.
- A3. Prior CPS Service History** - "Yes" if a family has received CPS or foster care services as a result of a prior substantiated report of abuse, neglect or whether a case was receiving CPS Case Planning and Case Management Services or foster care services at the time of the current assessment. "No" if the family has not received CPS Case Planning and Case Management Services or foster care services as a result of a prior substantiated report of abuse and/or neglect.
- A4. Number of Children in the Home** - The number of individuals under 18 years of age *residing* in the home at the time of the current report, including those removed as a result of the assessment or on runaway status.
- A5. Caregiver(s) Abused as Child (ren)** - "Yes" if credible statements were provided by the caregiver(s) or others on whether *either or both* caregivers were abused as children. Abuse includes physical, sexual, and any other type of abuse. "No" if neither caregiver was abused as a child, based on credible statements by the caregiver(s) or others.
- A6. Secondary Caregiver has a Current Substance Abuse Problem** - "Yes" if secondary caregiver has a current alcohol/drug abuse problem as evidenced by use causing conflict in home, extreme behavior/attitudes, financial difficulties, frequent illness, job absenteeism, job changes or unemployment, or driving under the influence, traffic violations, criminal arrests, disappearance of household items (especially those easily sold), or life organized around substance use (if yes, check appropriate boxes). "No" if the secondary caregiver has neither an alcohol nor drug abuse problem, or if there is no secondary caregiver in the home.
- A7. Primary or Secondary Caregiver Employs Excessive and/or Inappropriate Discipline** "Yes" if either caregiver employs excessive and/or inappropriate disciplinary practices, particularly methods employed to punish children in the home. The circumstances of the current incident and past practices may be considered. One standard is whether caregiver disciplinary practices caused or threatened harm to a child because they were excessively harsh physically or emotionally and/or inappropriate given the child's age or development. "No" if neither caregiver employs excessive and/or inappropriate disciplinary practices.
- A8. Caregiver(s) has a History of Domestic Violence** - "Yes" if *either* caregiver has a history of domestic violence defined as adult mistreatment of one another, evidenced by hitting, slapping, yelling, berating, verbal/physical abuse, arguments (may involve, or be blamed on, children), physical fighting (with or without injury), continuing threats, ultimate, intimidation, frequent separation/reconciliation, involvement of law enforcement and/or domestic violence programs, restraining orders, or criminal reports. "No" if neither caregiver has a history of domestic violence.
- A9. Caregiver(s) is a Domineering Parent** - "Yes" if *either* caregiver is domineering over child(ren), evidenced by rude remarks/behavior, controlling, abusive, unreasonable and/or excessive rules, overly restrictive, overreacts, unfair, or berating. "No" if neither caregiver is a domineering parent.

- A10. Child in the Home has a Developmental Disability or a History of Delinquency** - Score 1 if either or both exist. a) **No history** of either; b) **Yes - Developmental Disability** if there is evidence that a child has a special need including mental retardation, attention deficit disorder, learning disability. or is emotionally impaired. **History of Delinquency** -if any child has been referred to juvenile court for delinquent or status offense behavior. Status offenses not brought to court attention but which create stress within the household should also be scored here, such as children who run away from home, are habitually truant from school, or have drug or alcohol problems (if yes, check appropriate boxes).
- All. Secondary Caregiver Motivated to Improve Parenting Skills** - Based on worker judgment made by observing secondary caregiver response to a safety plan and/or other offers of agency assistance made during the assessment. a) **Yes, or no secondary caregiver in home** - no need to improve parenting skills or there is no secondary caregiver. If there is a need, the secondary caregiver is willing and able to work with the agency to improve parenting skills; b) **No** - the secondary caregiver needs to improve parenting skills but is not motivated and/or able to work with the agency.
- A12. Primary Caregiver Views Incident Less Seriously than Agency** - a) **No** - the primary caregiver views the incident as seriously or more seriously than the agency; b) **Yes** -the primary caregiver views the incident less seriously than the agency by refusing to be involved in safety planning for self/children, refusing services, and/or minimizing the level of abuse sustained by child.

NORTH CAROLINA
FAMILY RISK ASSESSMENT OF ABUSE/NEGLECT
POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Risk assessment identifies families which have intensive, high, moderate, or low probabilities of continuing to abuse or neglect their children. By completing the risk assessment, the worker obtains an objective appraisal of the likelihood that a family will maltreat their children in the next 18 to 24 months. The difference between the risk levels is substantial. High-risk families have significantly higher rates than low risk families of subsequent reports and substantiations and are more often involved in serious abuse or neglect incidents.

The risk scales are based on research on cases with substantiated abuse or neglect that examined the relationships between family characteristics and the outcomes of subsequent abuse and neglect. The scales do not predict recurrence, simply that a family is more or less likely to have another incident without intervention by the agency. One important result of the research is that a single instrument should not be used to assess the risk of both abuse and neglect. Different family dynamics are present in abuse and neglect situations. Hence, separate scales are used to assess the future probability of abuse or neglect.

Each scale (abuse and neglect) is completed regardless of the type of allegation(s) reported or assessed. All items on the risk assessment scales are completed. *The assigned social worker must make every effort throughout the assessment to obtain the information needed to answer each assessment question. However, if information cannot be obtained to answer a specific item, score the item as "0."*

Which cases: All CPS maltreatment reports assigned for an assessment that involve a family caregiver. This does not apply to reports involving child care facilities; residential facilities such as group homes or DHHS facilities. This does apply to non-licensed living arrangements, the non-custodial parents home or licensed family foster homes.

Who completes: Social worker assigned to complete the assessment.

When: The risk assessment is to be completed and documented prior to the time the case decision regarding the assessment is made. It is one of the elements considered in making the case decision.

A risk assessment is conducted when a new CPS report occurs in an ongoing case.

Decision: The risk assessment identifies the level of risk of future maltreatment and guides the case Decision including whether to close a report or open a case for Case Planning and Case Management or Placement services.

Appropriate completion: Only **one** household can be assessed on the risk assessment form. In some cases (for example, joint custody cases), it may be difficult to identify the household in which the children reside. The household which provides the majority of the child care should be selected. If that fails, choose the household where the CA/N incident took place. Some items are very objective (such as prior CA/N history or the age of the caregiver). *Others* require the worker to use discretionary judgment based on his or her assessment of the family.

Identifying the Primary and Secondary Caregivers

Some items refer to the primary or secondary caregiver of the children involved in the incident. First, identify the primary caregiver. The primary caregiver is simply the **adult** (typically the parent) living in the household who assumes the most responsibility for child care the majority of the time. When two adult caregivers are present *and* the worker is in doubt about which one assumes the most child care responsibility, the adult legally responsible for the children involved in the incident should be selected. If this rule does not resolve the question, the legally responsible adult who is the alleged perpetrator should be selected.- The secondary caregiver is defined as an **adult living in the household** who has routine responsibility for child care, but less responsibility than the primary caregiver. There may be circumstances where a Risk Assessment

Tool will need to be completed on two separate households, i.e., the mother has legal and physical custody of the child, yet the alleged incident occurred in the non-custodial father's home.

Following scoring all items in each scale, the assigned social worker totals the score for each scale and determines the risk level by checking the appropriate boxes in the risk level section. **The highest score from either scale determines the risk level.**

Policy Overrides

Policy overrides reflect incident seriousness and child vulnerability concerns, and have been determined by the agency to be case situations that warrant the highest level of service from the agency regardless of the risk scale score. If any policy override reasons exist, the risk level is increased to intensive.

After completing the risk scales, the assigned social worker indicates if any policy override reasons exist. If more than one reason exists, indicate the primary override reason. Only one reason can be selected. All overrides must be approved in writing by the supervisor.

Discretionary Overrides

The assigned social worker also indicates if there are any discretionary override reasons. A discretionary override is used to increase the risk level by one increment in any case where the assigned social worker feels the risk level set by the scales is too low. All overrides must be approved in writing by the supervisor.

Note: Policy and Discretionary overrides should be used only in exceptional cases.